



United States Fish & Wildlife Service

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09/02/2004

Memorandum

From AD - Budg, Planning & Hum Res
Subject Transportation Subsidy Program

The next quarterly distribution of transit media for October, November, and December is **Wednesday, September 8, 2004.**

Distribution of transit media to the employees who have already submitted their applications will be at the following locations and times:

<u>Building Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Distribution Location</u>	<u>Time(s)</u>
Main Interior Building	1849 C Street, NW Washington, D.C.	Cafeteria - North Side	A-H: 8:30 - 11:30 a.m. I-Q: 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. R-Z: 1:00 - 3:30 p.m.
Arlington Square	4401 N. Fairfax Dr. Arlington, VA	Room 205	9:00 a.m. - Noon

When retrieving your transit media, you **must** present your Departmental Identification Card to the Department of Transportation agent and sign a Transit Benefit Certification Form.

IF YOU MISS THE DISTRIBUTION DATE: You have three options for your convenience:

- (1) You may acquire and complete the "Authorization for Third Party Pick-Up of Transit Subsidy."
- (2) You may come to the make up day which is scheduled for **Wednesday, September 15, 2004, from 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.**, in the MIB cafeteria.
- (3) You may go directly to the Department of Transportation headquarters building located at 400 7th Street & D, SW, Plaza Level in Room 206, from 8:30 a.m. until 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday (excluding holidays).

The following are questions and answers regarding the Department of the Interior's Transportation Subsidy Program. If you have additional questions, please contact Kimm Slayton at 703-358-2121.

What is the Transportation Subsidy Program? This program gives enrolled employees up to \$100 a month for mass transportation and vanpools. It is designed to encourage employees to use mass transit for

commuting to and from work. Employees will receive the subsidy through the Metrochek program which is distributed on a quarterly basis. To participate, you must fill out the enrollment form, “[U.S. Department of the Interior’s Public Transportation Subsidy Program Application](#)” which can be obtained from your administrative officer, servicing human resources office, or from the Human Resources web site at http://hr.fws.gov/application_transit.pdf. Application forms must be sent to Kimm Slayton, Division of Human Resources, Mailstop HR 2027.

Who is eligible for the Transportation Subsidy Program? Employees in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area who use mass transportation or vanpools to commute to work will be eligible for the subsidy. You must be enrolled to receive the subsidy. Employees are ***not*** eligible to participate in the subsidy program if they are in a carpool that receives a federally subsidized parking space. There is no provision in existing statutes to reimburse employees for carpooling expenses.

What qualifies as mass transportation or a vanpool? Mass transportation is any form of public transportation (bus, light rail, subway, train, or authorized vanpool). A vanpool is a “Commuter Highway Vehicle” having a seating capacity of at least 6 adults, and is to be used for transporting employees to and from work for at least 80% of the mileage. Vanpools frequently satisfy the criteria for a “Commuter Highway Vehicle” while carpools do not.

Are vanpool riders and vanpool owner/operators eligible to participate in the Transportation Subsidy Program? Vanpool riders are eligible to participate if the vanpool is a “Commuter Highway Vehicle” and is registered with the local transportation authority and accepts transit passes as payment. Vanpool owner/operators are not eligible to participate in the Transportation Subsidy Program.

Can I participate in the Transportation Subsidy Program if I use qualifying public transportation less than 5 days per week? Employees may have an *established* commuting pattern which consists of using a vanpool and/or public transportation less than 5 days per week on a regular and recurring basis. If you have such an established commuting pattern, you are only allowed to claim transportation expenses for the days that you are using a vanpool and/or public transportation. This must be indicated on your application form and will be reviewed against your actual transportation expenses claimed. Occasional or sporadic use of public transportation does ***not*** qualify for participation in the program.

What is Metrochek and how do I use it? Metrochek is a universal fare media voucher for the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area. Currently, there are over 90 different companies that accept Metrochek as a voucher for transportation costs. Metrochek can be used instantly as a Metro subway ticket, or exchanged for a variety of other passes. For more information on Metrochek, see <http://www.wmata.com>.

How often are Metrocheks distributed? The Department has contracted with the Department of Transportation to administer the program. DOT officials set-up distribution locations each quarter to distribute the Metrocheks. You will have to present your government ID when picking up your subsidy. Reminder email messages about the scheduled distribution dates and locations for the Transportation Subsidy Program will be emailed to employees via the Service portal.

If I am a new employee, should I wait for the next distribution period before signing up? You can apply for the Transportation Subsidy Program at any time. Your transit pass will be pro-rated based on when the application is processed. Please remember, however, ***that there are no retroactive provisions for this program.***

How do I cancel my enrollment? To cancel enrollment, a written notice stating the date you wish to end your participation and your unused fare media, must be sent to Kimm Slayton, Transportation Subsidy Program Coordinator, Division of Human Resources, Mailstop HR 2027.

If I leave the Service, what happens to the unused fare media? You will be required to return the fare media to your office. If you have used more than the pro-rated amount, you will be required to reimburse the Service for the difference.

What is the role of a supervisor in the Transportation Subsidy Program? To serve as certifying official for employee participation in the Transportation Subsidy Program. Supervisors will receive the transportation subsidy application form from their employees to review for completeness; perform “reasonable” checks to ensure eligibility; and sign the forms to signify approval. Supervisors will also ensure that the Payroll Cost Structure Account Number is complete and accurate.

Additional questions about the transportation subsidy program can be addressed to your servicing human resources office or visit the HR web site at <http://hr.fws.gov/transportation.htm>.